

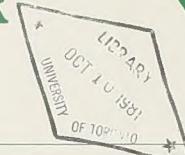
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# LONG POINT Provincial Park



Ministry of  
Natural  
Resources

Hon. Alan W. Pope  
Minister  
W.T. Foster  
Deputy Minister



AUGUST 1981

## Can Long Point Provincial Park handle more people?

During the summer months, Long Point Provincial Park is full of visitors. But the park has many year-round residents as well.

No, these residents are not people, they are plants and animals, and some of them are rare or uncommon.

Management of the park is not an easy task, since providing recreational space and facilities for over 100,000 visitors each year must be done in such a way as to keep damage to the fragile nature environment to a minimum.

In the number of people living in cities in southern Ontario continues to grow, pressure on recreational areas such as Long Point Provincial Park will also grow. According to park superintendent Al MacPherson, "Long Point Provincial Park is one of southwestern Ontario's most popular parks and increasing demands for campsites and swimming facilities have seen this park operating at almost full capacity throughout the summer". The question to be answered is, can Long Point Provincial Park handle more people?

Room for more facilities is limited for a number of reasons: the actual area of the park is quite small (the park covers less than 1 per cent of the Long Point peninsula); parts of the park area are open water or marsh; a considerable proportion of the park is already developed with roads, parking lots, buildings, campsites, etc.; and parts of the remaining undeveloped land contain rare or uncommon plants and animals.

The people who visit the park should be involved in the planning process, to answer questions such as: "Do we need more or fewer facilities?" The master planning process is underway and now is the time for you to speak your mind, by completing the comment sheet (enclosed).



## Sand dunes are shifty characters!

The dunes of Long Point Provincial Park are always shifting due to wind and water action. The thing is, we could cause these dunes to eventually cover up parking lots, campsites and roads in the park without even knowing that we're doing it.

Beach grass grows on sand dunes and helps to hold all that sand in place so that the dunes will build upon themselves, instead of being blown back over the park. But, the more people walk over the dunes, the more difficult it is for the beach grass to grow.

You may have noticed some dune areas at Long Point Provincial Park have fences around them. Park staff have been busy planting beach grass in these areas, and so far the project has gone very well. Since foot traffic has been limited within these fenced areas, the beach grass has been allowed to grow and is holding the dunes in place. The dunes now act as a windbreak for the camping and day-use areas, instead of covering them over.

Another dune device being used in the park is the wooden boardwalk over the dune in the day-use area. This boardwalk takes the pounding from the thousands of pairs of feet that would otherwise be slowly wearing the dune down. Visitors are encouraged to make use of the boardwalk.

If you have any comments on the dune rehabilitation program at Long Point Provincial Park, be sure to fill out the enclosed comment sheet.



## What is a master plan?

A master plan is a document based on research, analysis and public input that will guide the future operation and development of the park.

The planning 'horizon' is twenty years, however, it was not until 1976 that master plans were formally recognized under the Provincial Parks Act.

A master plan establishes policies for management of the park and its resources.

## Master Planning and Long Point Provincial Park

Planning at the individual park level - master planning has been recognized since the 1950's; however, it was not until 1976 that master plans were formally recognized under the Provincial Parks Act.

# Introduction to the Park

## Regional Setting and Access

Long Point Provincial Park is located near the base of Long Point peninsula, a 32 km sandspit extending into Lake Erie. Long Point peninsula is within the Township of Norfolk, in the Regional Municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk.

Although the park represents but a small fraction of the total area of the peninsula, it is an important focal point for a wide variety of recreational opportunities in the Long Point area (see 'Local Recreation Opportunities and Points of Interest' section).

Long Point Provincial Park is actually in two sections. The smaller of the two, the 'Old Park' campground (5.2 hectares), is closer to the base of the peninsula and is flanked by cottages to the east and west. The larger (136.1 hectares), more recently acquired portion of the park represents the eastern limit of public access to the peninsula.

Most of Long Point peninsula was owned by the Long Point Company (a small group of dedicated sportsmen) for over 100 years. They recently donated about 3200 hectares of land and marsh to the federal government for management by the Canadian Wildlife Service (C.W.S.) as a National Wildlife Area. Present land ownership is shown on the map of Long Point peninsula.

The nearest community to the park is the village of Long Point Beach which contains some 840 seasonal residential units. Although Long Point Beach is a cottaging community with limited services for park visitors, Port Rowan (10 km northwest of the park, population 795) has stores and services to meet most visitor needs. In addition, several larger towns are in close proximity to the park and provide a full range of services.

Long Point Provincial Park is an asset to the local community due in part to its ability to attract tourist dollars. In recent years, annual attendance at Long Point

## REGIONAL CONTEXT AND MARKET AREA



The master planning of Long Point Provincial Park was preceded by a 1977 interim management guidelines document (a five year management and operation plan for the park). In addition, an environmental management study for Long Point Provincial Park was conducted in 1978, which made recommendations on such topics as sand dune rehabilitation. A detailed life science inventory of the park is being finalized as well. These documents will be major components of the Long Point Provincial Park master planning process.

## What is the master planning process and how does this information report fit in?

The first step was the news release announcing the initiation of the planning process for Long Point Provincial Park, and inviting the public to express their concerns about the future of the park (April 16, 1981).

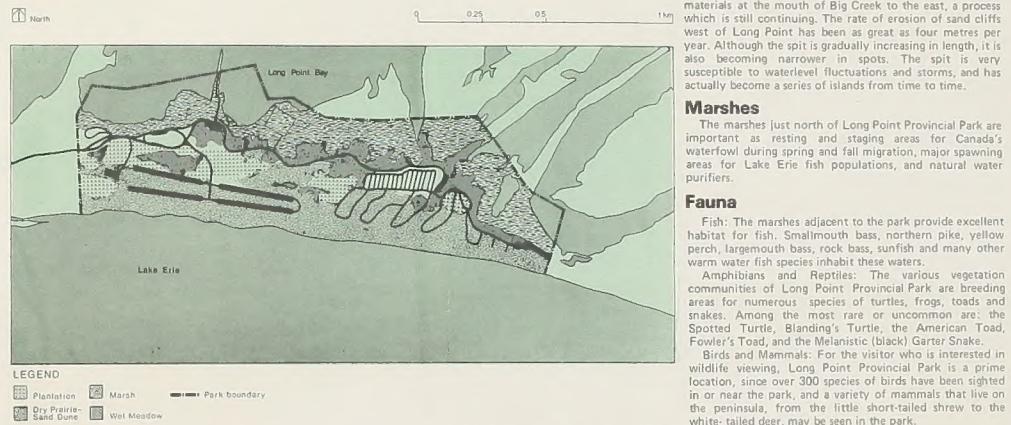
The second step is distribution of the information report you are now reading. The purpose of this report is to let you know about Long Point Provincial Park, its natural resources and man-made facilities, the amount of use that it receives and its importance to the local area, as well as to the people of Ontario and elsewhere. The enclosed comment sheet is provided for your input in the form of comments and suggestions.

Based on the comments and suggestions we receive, along with studies conducted by government agencies, universities, interest groups and individuals, a preliminary master plan will be prepared. The preliminary master plan for Long Point Provincial Park is tentatively scheduled for distribution at the end of 1981.

Following public review of the preliminary master plan, the Long Point Provincial Park Master Plan will be prepared taking into account all public input received.

# Natural Environment

## GENERALIZED PLANT COMMUNITIES



## Vegetation

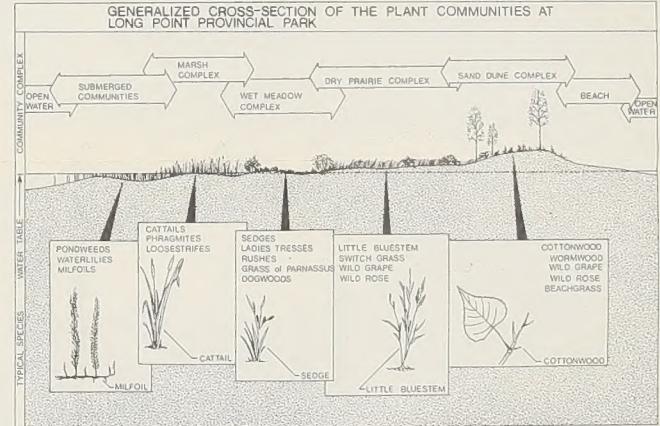
Long Point Provincial Park contains a number of varied and diverse vegetation communities, some of which, such as the wet meadows, harbour rare species of flora. Of the species which botanists have found growing in the wet meadows of the park in recent years, the Great Plains Ladies Tresses Orchid, and several other species of flora are rare in Canada.

Since the park is located on the relatively older land at the base of the peninsula, some species found in the park may not be found on the more recently formed areas of the peninsula.

A walk across the width of the park starting at the Lake Erie side will take you from sand beaches and sand dunes through dry prairies to wet meadows and marshes. Each of these different areas contains a particular group of plants, as can be seen on the illustration of the cross section of the park.

## Dunes

On the lake (south) side of Long Point Provincial Park is a sand and gravel beach. Wind-blown sand has formed dunes which lie parallel to the shore. These sand dunes are very susceptible to wind erosion and trampling (see article on front page).



## Climate

Due to its southern location and the moderating influence of Lake Erie, the climate of the Long Point area is very conducive to summer outdoor recreation activities, such as swimming, sunbathing, picnicking and camping.

## Formation of the Long Point Peninsula

The Long Point sandspit began to form some 4,000 years ago as a result of longshore currents continually eroding the shoreline of the Norfolk Sand Plain and depositing eroded materials at the mouth of Big Creek to the east, a process which is still continuing. The rate of erosion of sand cliffs west of Long Point has been as great as four metres per year. Although the spit is gradually increasing in length, it is also becoming narrower in spots. The spit is very susceptible to waterlevel fluctuations and storms, and has actually become a series of islands from time to time.

## Marshes

The marshes just north of Long Point Provincial Park are important as resting and staging areas for Canada's waterfowl during spring and fall migration, major spawning areas for Lake Erie fish populations, and natural water purifiers.

## Fauna

**Fish:** The marshes adjacent to the park provide excellent habitat for fish. Smallmouth bass, northern pike, yellow perch, largemouth bass, rock bass, sunfish and many other warm water fish species inhabit these waters.

**Amphibians and Reptiles:** The various vegetation communities of Long Point Provincial Park are breeding areas for numerous species of turtles, frogs, toads and snakes. Among the most rare or uncommon are: the Spotted Turtle, Blanding's Turtle, the American Toad, Fowler's Toad, and the Melanistic (black) Garter Snake.

**Birds and Mammals:** For the visitor who is interested in wildlife viewing, Long Point Provincial Park is a prime location, since over 300 species of birds have been sighted in or near the park, and a variety of mammals that live on the peninsula, from the little short-tailed shrew to the white-tailed deer, may be seen in the park.

# Recreation

## Market Area

Most day-visitors to Long Point Provincial Park live within 1½ hours' driving time, and most campers live within a 2 hour drive of the park. The urban areas of Brantford, Cambridge, Hamilton, London, St. Thomas and Woodstock all lie within 1½ hours' driving time of Long Point Provincial Park. Guelph, Waterloo, Kitchener-Waterloo, St. Catharines, Burlington, Mississauga, Kitchener-Waterloo, St. Catharines, Burlington, and part of Metropolitan Toronto lie within 2 hours. In fact, there is an urban market of over three million people in close proximity to Long Point Provincial Park.

The population of Haldimand-Norfolk is expected to increase in the coming decades as new industries move into the Region. This influx of people to the area may lead to a greater demand for outdoor recreation opportunities and, consequently, increased pressure on Long Point Provincial Park to accommodate some of this demand.

## Recreation Opportunities within the Park

Within Long Point Provincial Park, the visitor may camp, picnic, swim, boat, sunbathe, fish, view and photograph wildlife. You can learn about the history and natural environment of Long Point through the Visitor Services program.



## Park Visitation

Both day visitors and campers choose to visit the park largely because of the beach and swimming opportunities available.

Most day visitation to Long Point Provincial Park occurs on weekends during the summer, especially on Sundays when as many as 3,000 people per day may attend the day use area of the park. Day use on weekdays, on the other hand, is relatively low with an average of less than 200 visitors per day.

Although Friday and Saturday are the most popular nights for camping, camping attendance is spread fairly evenly throughout the week. Over half of the 265 sites are occupied almost every night from the last week in June to the first week in September.

## Local Recreation Opportunities and Points of Interest

While many people visit Long Point Provincial Park to camp, picnic, or swim, some use the park as a jumping off point for activities such as boating and angling in Long Point Bay. Others (over 3,500 last year) come in the fall to hunt waterfowl in the Waterfowl Management Unit north of the park. During the month of March, hundreds of people come to the park to view waterfowl. In April, many others attend the South-western Ontario field dog trials held in, and adjacent to, the park.

There are several other provincial parks within an hour's drive of Long Point. The nearest is Tawatinaw Point (40 km to the northeast), which offers 200 campsites, 1000 metres of beach, a 2 km nature trail, a nine hole golf course, and a visitor services program. Others are Iroquois Beach (35 km west), Selkirk and Rock Point (70 and 115 km east, respectively) all of which are located on the Lake Erie shoreline and have camping and day-use facilities.

The Long Point Region Conservation Authority operates a number of conservation areas in the Long Point vicinity, which offer facilities for such activities as camping, picnicking and swimming.

Historical attractions in the area include Backus Conservation Area (12 km north), which features the oldest operating grist mill in Ontario, and Backus Tract, a 263 ha southern hardwood forest stand containing many Carolinian tree species with a very limited distribution in Canada; the St. Williams forestry station (1 km north), Canada's first forestry station; and the Eva Brook Donly museum in Simcoe.

Among other points of interest near Long Point Provincial Park are the Naramata Fish Hatchery (28 km northeast); the Nanticoke industrial development (Ontario Hydro, Stelco and Texaco, 55 km northeast); the Duth Research Station (Delhi); and the Houghton Sandhills (18 km west). All of these may be discovered while visiting the Long Point area.

# Park Policies

The Preliminary Master Plan, based on research, analysis and public input, will include draft policies pertaining to Long Point Provincial Park goals and objectives, classification, zoning, management and operation.

The park goal will relate to the goal of the Ontario provincial parks system which is to provide a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities and to protect provincially significant natural, cultural and recreational environments. The objectives of Long Point Provincial Park will reflect on how the park is going to help achieve the protection, recreation, heritage appreciation and tourism objectives of the provincial parks system and attain the park goal.



Since no individual park can be all things to all people, Provincial Parks have been organized into six broad categories: Wilderness Parks, Nature Reserves, Historical Parks, Natural Environment Parks, Waterway Parks and Recreation Parks. The classification for the Long Point Provincial Park will clearly express the role of the park in achieving the provincial park objectives.

Another way to help to achieve these objectives and to ensure the orderly development and effective management of the park is through zoning. Long Point Provincial Park will be zoned on the basis of resource significance and recreational potential. The Park may include any or all the following: natural environment development, nature reserve, historical and access zones, each having its own set of development and management policies.

Draft policies relating to park operations and the level of environmental management appropriate to Long Point Provincial Park's classification and objectives will also be presented in the preliminary master plan.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK? LET'S HEAR ABOUT IT!

If you are interested in the future of Long Point Provincial Park, please write your comments and suggestions on this sheet. When you are finished, kindly drop it off at the Long Point Provincial Park office, or send it to the following address by September 30, 1981:

**OCT 15 1981**  
M. F. MCKENZIE, DISTRICT MANAGER  
MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
645 NORFOLK ST. NORTH  
SIMCOE, ONTARIO N3Y 3R2

Remember, your comments and suggestions are needed in order to ensure the best possible future for the park, and the best park for you, the visitor. Thank you for showing your interest.

(Unless otherwise requested, all submissions will be considered as information which is available to the general public. If you would like your comments kept in confidence, check here: [ ] ).

Please give us your ideas on anything that you feel is important to the management and planning of Long Point Provincial Park. (Use the back of this sheet, if necessary).

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Please add any further comments you wish to make about the park, this background information tabloid, or the master planning program in general.

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Which of the following best describes you, in relation to Long Point Provincial Park?

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|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| [ ] Frequent camper                   | [ ] Occasional camper            |
| [ ] Frequent day visitor              | [ ] Occasional day visitor       |
| [ ] Long Point cottager               | [ ] Other (please specify) _____ |
| [ ] User of Waterfowl Management Area | _____                            |
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How many times did you visit the park last year? \_\_\_\_\_

How many times have you visited the park in total? \_\_\_\_\_

Where is your permanent residence (nearest city, community, or county)? \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to be sent a copy of the Long Point Provincial Park preliminary master plan when it becomes available, please print your name and address here:

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